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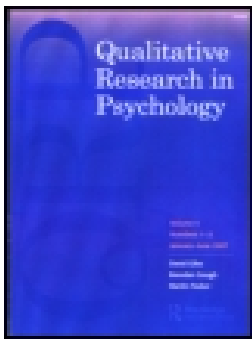
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Video installation as a creative means of representing temporality in visual data

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Submission for QRIP Special Issue on Creative Representations of Qualitative Research:

Video Installation as a Creative Means of Representing Temporality in Visual Data

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Susan Hansen coordinates the Visual Methods Group, and is the Chair of the Forensic Psychology Research Group, at Middlesex University, London. She has a background in Social Psychology, Communication Studies, and Art History. Her research explores communities' material engagements with, and affective responses to urban environments; the analysis of graffiti as a form of visual dialogue; and the promise of an archaeological approach to understanding street art and graffiti through the longitudinal photo documentation (or repeat photography) of single sites.

Video Installation as a Creative Means for Representing Temporality in Visual Data

Keywords: Repeat photography; longitudinal photo-documentation; video installation; street art; graffiti; urban creativity; visual methods.

A time-lapse video was created from a sequence of 1247 photographs taken in the same urban neighbourhood in North London over a period of 42 months. Whymark Avenue was originally the site of Banksy's (2012) *Slave Labour*, a work that was removed without notice for private auction in February 2013 – much to the consternation of the local community. Many of the subsequent works on the wall, especially in the period immediately following the removal of *Slave Labour*, provide visual and verbal commentary on this act of 'theft.'

Photographs of this site were taken daily from the same position, with a constant frame. Close up photographs were also taken where there were details not otherwise visible from the constant frame. Some of these are included in the edited video, to give the viewer a sense of the fine detail of the visual interaction at play. All marks made on the wall – including stencils and other forms of street art, graffiti tags and pieces, written commentary and notes, and partial and wholesale erasures – were documented. Edited together, and viewed as a continuously moving image, this time-lapse video shows the life of the site over time, at the rate of one frame per day – three years condensed into a little over three minutes.

This film is part of a larger research project on the longitudinal photo-documentation of urban life (Hansen & Flynn, 2015a). The project uses repeat photography to study street art and graffiti as visual dialogue. Capturing these ephemeral forms of visual communication as they appear and disappear over time gives us a unique insight into graffiti and street art's existence within a field of social interaction – as a form of democratic conversation on urban walls. This form of data collection in turn allows street

art and graffiti to be examined as visual dialogue. Analytic tools from ethnomethodology and conversation analysis were applied to this visual data – including the next turn proof procedure, repair, and membership categorization analysis (Sacks et al., 1974; Sacks, 1995) – in order to study visual data as a form of asynchronous, yet sequential, communication (Hansen & Flynn, 2015b).

This form of analysis departs from existent forms of visual analysis in that it is not concerned with the semiotics or iconography of decontextualized individual photographs. The aim is to make visible the dialogue amongst artists, writers, community members and local authorities and, following the next turn proof procedure, to illustrate the ways in which each party shows their understanding of the prior work on the wall via their own contribution to the 'conversation'. Figure 1, below, depicts a summary of work on the wall from May 2014 to April 2015. A closer examination of these frames shows the dialogue between the parties.

PLEASE INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

Figure 1. Frames from *1247 Days on Whymark Avenue* (May 2014 – April 2015)

The work in frame 1 of Figure 2 provides critical commentary on our mundane evaluations of the status, or worth, of street art. It offers a critique of the objectification and commodification of urban art and enacts a division between 'A BANKSY' worth exclaiming over and 'VANDALISM' not worthy of our attention. The author of this work displays their understanding of, and stance towards, the prior work on the wall by adopting the perspective of the imagined passersby – who is intent on the task of categorizing it as 'A BANKSY' or as 'VANDALISM', in order to determine whether it is worth looking at. In frame 2 of Figure 2 some of the letters of the original text-based piece have been selectively painted over. The modified dialogue now reads, "DO BE ILL" rather than "DON'T BE SILLY." The writer of this amendment displays their stance towards the original work by translating "DON'T BE SILLY" into urban slang, "DO BE ILL", thus inverting the aesthetic socio-moral judgment animated by the original piece. This appropriation enjoins the viewer to "BE ILL" – or to engage with street art as a sublime and creative activity, thereby disrupting the dismissive practices of looking exposed by the original piece. The final frame of Figure 2 shows an amendment made to the work in April 2015, when the letters that had been erased were re-written, reinstating the original message of the work. In 'restoring' the text, this contributor makes clear the value placed on the original work, by rejecting the illicit erasure accomplished by the prior 'destructive' author.

Projected at a life-sized scale, and on a continuous loop, this interactive installation (see Figure 2, below) offers viewers a level of phenomenological immersion in the passage of time – a meta-perspective ordinarily only available to local members of the neighbourhood for whom this conversation is a perhaps unremarkable element of their quotidian urban environment. Marker pens on chains give viewers the opportunity to make their own marks on this living wall and to participate in this distributed urban conversation.

PLEASE INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

Figure 2. *1247 Days on Whymark Avenue*.
Installation View. Inside Out Festival, London

1247 Days on Whymark Avenue has been screened as a life-sized interactive video installation at the Inside Out Festival in London and at the International Visual Sociology

Association's Film Stream in Montreal. It has also been submitted for screening at mural festivals internationally. Video installation offers a creative means of representing the compressed temporality and asynchronous dialogue captured by this visual research project. For a visual overview of the project see Figure 3.

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PLEASE INSERT FIGURE 3A ABOUT HERE (ON A SEPARATE PAGE)

PLEASE INSERT FIGURE 3B ABOUT HERE (ON A SEPARATE PAGE)

Fig1



Fig2



Figure 3a. Frames from 1247 Days on Whymark Avenue (May 2012 – February 2017)

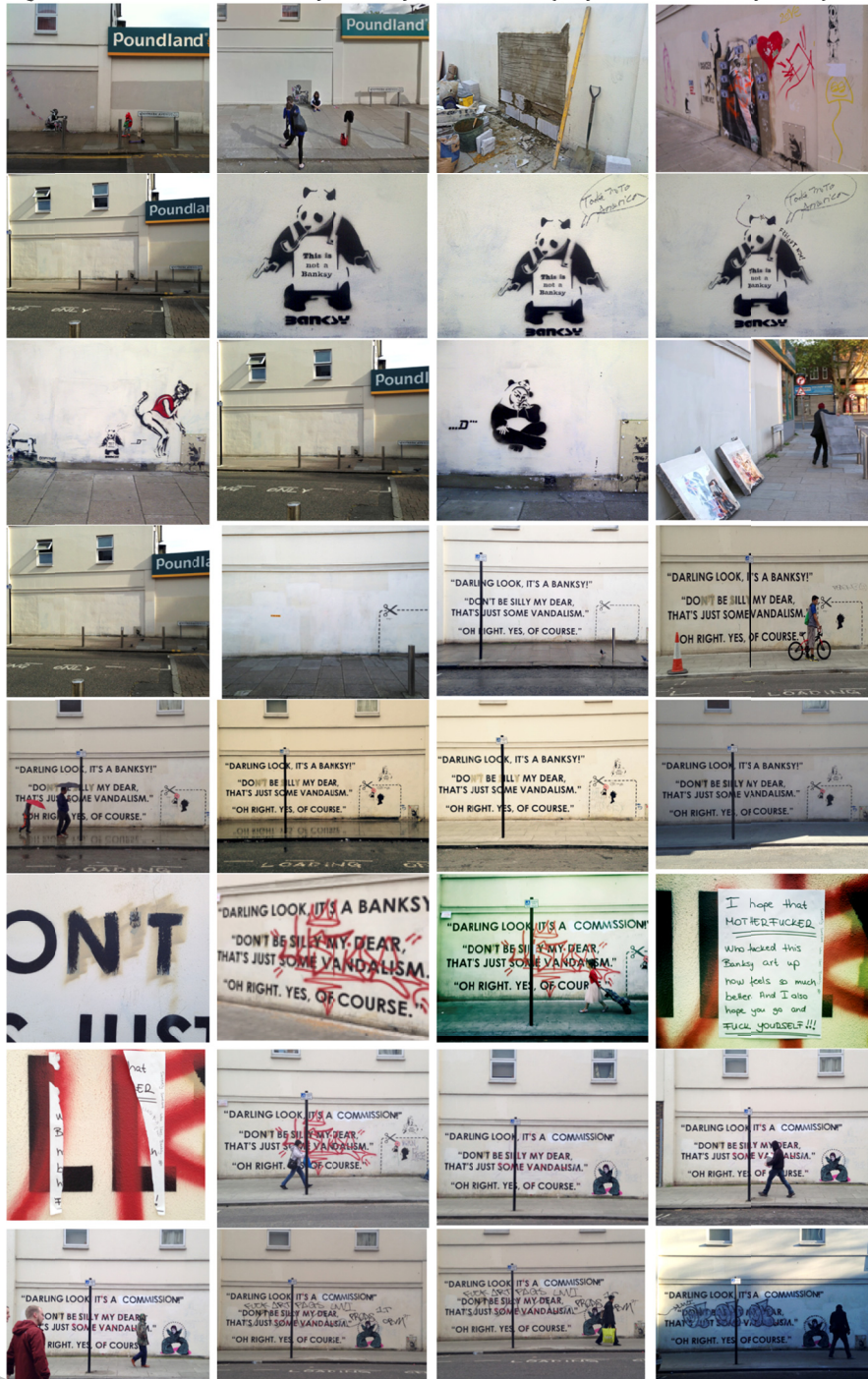


Figure 3b. Frames from 1247 Days on Whymark Avenue (May 2012 – February 2017)

